HOUSING MARKET INFORMATION

# RENTAL MARKET REPORT

## Newfoundland and Labrador Highlights*

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Date Released: Spring 2013

Figure 1

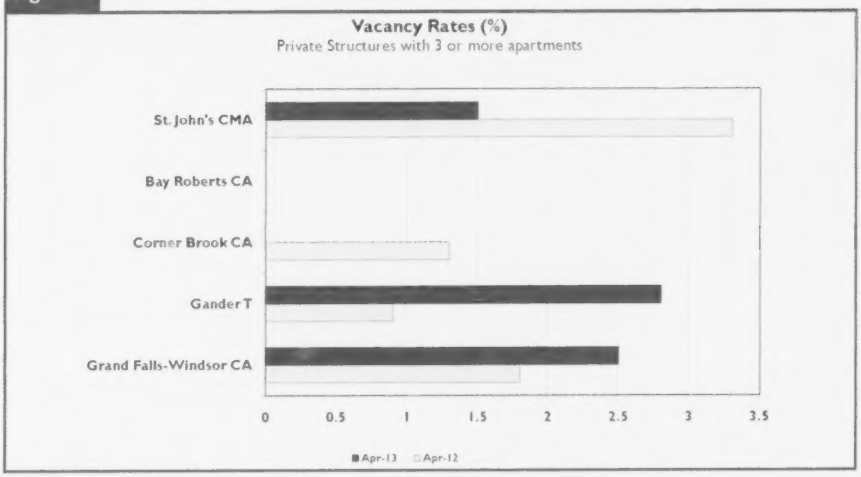
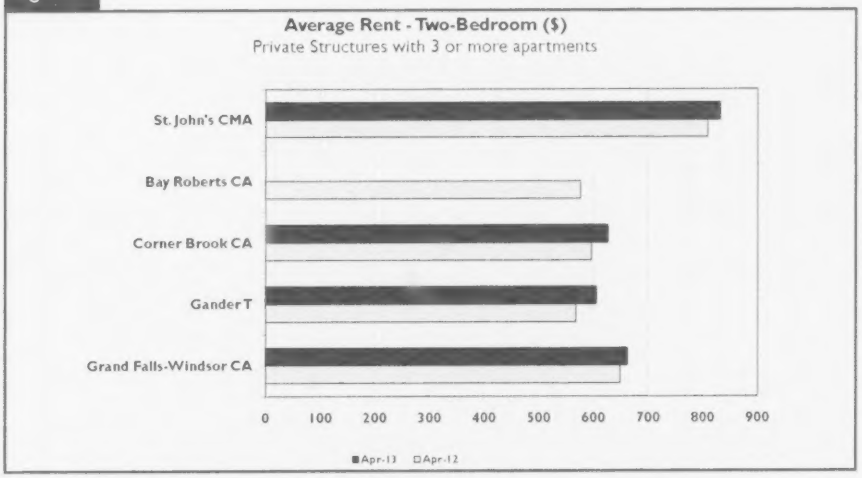



Figure 2




## Vacancy Rates Varied Across Province

- The overall provincial vacancy rate was 1.7 per cent in April 2013, down from 2.7 per cent last year.
- St. John's area vacancy rate was 1.5 per cent in April compared to 3.3 per cent last year.
- Corner Brook was the only centre to report a vacancy rate of zero per cent in April.
- The average two-bedroom rent was $751 across the provincial urban centres surveyed.

*Only centres with a population of 10,000 + are included in the survey.
**Some data for Bay Roberts is suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable. The vacancy rate in Corner Brook was zero per cent in April 2013.

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## Overview

According to the results of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Spring Rental Market Survey[1], vacancy rates varied in the province's urban centres[2]. The overall provincial vacancy rate decreased to 1.7 per cent in April from 2.7 per cent a year ago. The vacancy rate was highest in Gander, while Corner Brook had the lowest vacancy rate at zero per cent. Average rents were highest in the St. John's area and the lowest in Gander.

The St. John's area rental market posted a vacancy rate of 1.5 per cent in April 2013 versus 3.3 per cent last year. Current house prices, paired with population growth and a strong economy, supported rental market demand during the survey period and slowed the movement from renter households to homeownership.

Gander posted a vacancy rate of 2.8 per cent this spring compared to 0.9 per cent last year, which represented the largest increase across the province. The increase represents a relatively small number of units and remains low in historical terms as it continues to be supported by a stable local economy. Gander's economy is based on activity generated due to its central location as a regional service hub, its large hospital, international airport and solid residential and commercial development.

Grand Falls-Windsor posted a vacancy rate of 2.5 per cent in April versus 1.8 per cent last year. The central town's economy has performed very well in recent years and has been supportive of the demand for rental units. Increased economic activity throughout the area has been driven by its large hospital, community colleges, a significant increase in residential and commercial development, and its location as a service hub for surrounding communities in the area.

Strength in the health, education and tourism sectors and a well diversified economy continued to support demand for rental units in the Corner Brook area. The vacancy rate for the western region hub was zero per cent this spring compared to 1.3 per cent last year.

## Average Rents

Overall, the average two bedroom rent was $751 per month across the five urban centres surveyed, with increases recorded in every centre. The highest average two-bedroom rent recorded was $832 in St. John's, while Gander recorded the lowest average rent at $605. The remaining average two-bedroom rents were $626 in Corner Brook and $662 in Grand Falls-Windsor, which was the highest recorded outside the St. John's area. The number of surveyed units in Bay Roberts was too small to release the average two-bedroom rent, but the overall average rent in this area was $648 in April 2013.

Based on structures common to both the 2012 and 2013 surveys[3], overall average rents increased in all centres. In St. John's, the average rent increased 4.4 per cent. In Corner Brook, the increase was 5.3 per cent. In Grand Falls-Windsor average rents increased 2.1 per cent, while Gander increased the most, at 6.2 per cent.

The average rent increases were driven by steady rental demand brought about by increased economic activity throughout the province, as well as general growth in population, income and employment in the surveyed centres.

## Availability Rates

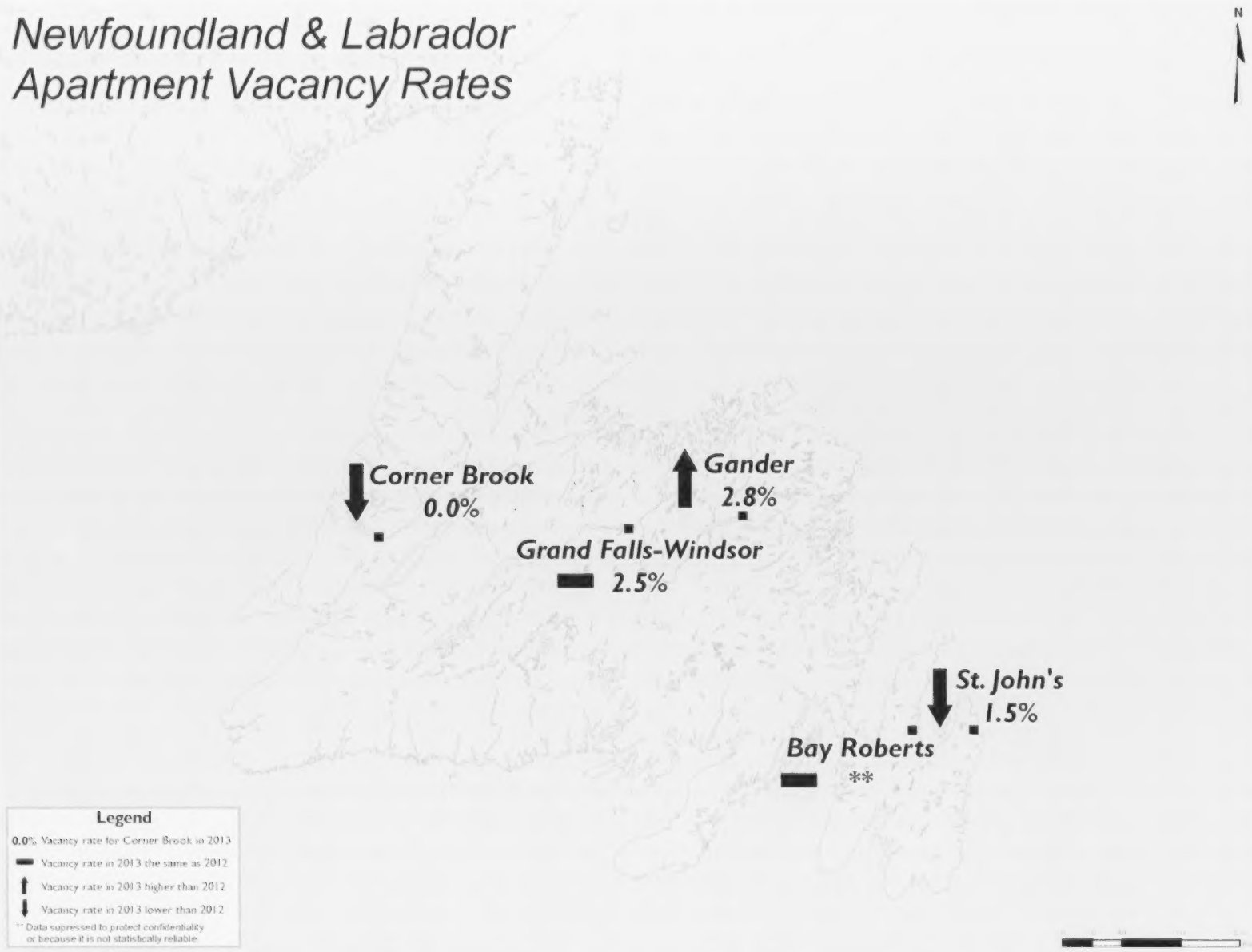
The apartment availability rate ranged from a high of 2.8 per cent in Gander in April 2013 versus 0.9 per cent last year, to a low of 0.5 per cent in Corner Brook compared to 1.9 per cent in the spring of 2012. The availability rate was 2.5 per cent in the Grand Falls-Windsor area versus a similar 2.3 per cent a year ago, while St. John's recorded a rate of 1.9 per cent compared to 3.8 per cent in April 2012.

1 Based on privately-initiated rental apartments in structures of three or more units.

2 Urban centres are defined as centres with a population of over 10,000. Census metropolitan areas (CMA) are based on Statistics Canada definition.

3 When comparing year-over-year average rents, the age of the building needs to be taken into consideration because rents in newly-built structures tend to be higher than in existing buildings. By comparing rents for units that are common to both 2012 and 2013 spring rental market surveys, we can get a better indication of actual rent increases paid by most tenants.

# Newfoundland & Labrador Apartment Vacancy Rates



## 1.1.1 Private Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) by Bedroom Type Newfoundland and Labrador

| Centre | Bachelor | | 1 Bedroom | | 2 Bedroom | | 3 Bedroom + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 |
| St. John's CMA | 3.6 | 1.1 | 3.1 | 0.9 | 3.6 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 1.5 |
| Bay Roberts CA | n/u | n/u | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |
| Corner Brook CA | 0.0 | ** | 2.9 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 1.3 | 0.0 |
| Gander T | ** | ** | 0.8 | 4.2 | 0.7 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 0.9 | 2.8 |
| Grand Falls-Windsor CA | 17.9 | ** | 2.4 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 2.6 | ** | 0.0 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| **Newfoundland & Labrador 10,000+** | **3.6** | **1.4** | **2.9** | **1.2** | **2.6** | **1.8** | **2.0** | **2.9** | **2.7** | **1.7** |

The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates:
a - Excellent, b- Very good, c - Good, d - Fair (Use with Caution)
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.
n/u: No units exist in the universe for this category n/s: No units exist in the sample for this category n/a: Not applicable
Please click Methodology or Data Reliability Tables Appendix link for more details

## 1.1.2 Private Apartment Average Rents ($) by Bedroom Type Newfoundland and Labrador

| Centre | Bachelor | | 1 Bedroom | | 2 Bedroom | | 3 Bedroom + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 |
| St. John's CMA | 604 | 620 | 695 | 708 | 808 | 832 | 854 | 885 | 760 | 778 |
| Bay Roberts CA | n/u | n/u | ** | ** | 576 | ** | ** | ** | 575 | 648 |
| Corner Brook CA | 425 | 475 | 512 | 547 | 596 | 626 | 735 | 797 | 578 | 614 |
| Gander T | ** | ** | 521 | 540 | 568 | 605 | 624 | 678 | 560 | 594 |
| Grand Falls-Windsor CA | ** | ** | 535 | 537 | 649 | 662 | ** | ** | 628 | 640 |
| **Newfoundland & Labrador 10,000+** | **585** | **607** | **651** | **666** | **727** | **751** | **819** | **845** | **704** | **724** |

The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates (cv = coefficient of variation):
a - Excellent ($0 \leq cv \leq 2.5$), b- Very good ($2.5 < cv \leq 5$), c - Good ($5 < cv \leq 7.5$), d - Fair (Use with Caution) ($7.5 < cv \leq 10$)
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.
n/u: No units exist in the universe for this category n/s: No units exist in the sample for this category n/a: Not applicable
Please click Methodology or Data Reliability Tables Appendix link for more details

## 1.1.3 Number of Private Apartment Units in the Universe by Bedroom Type Newfoundland and Labrador

| Centre | Bachelor | | 1 Bedroom | | 2 Bedroom | | 3 Bedroom + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 |
| St. John's CMA | 364 | 366 | 1,104 | 1,108 | 1,716 | 1,723 | 284 | 281 | 3,468 | 3,478 |
| Bay Roberts CA | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | 32 | 31 |
| Corner Brook CA | 25 | 25 | 114 | 118 | 311 | 309 | 39 | 42 | 489 | 494 |
| Gander T | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | 568 | 588 |
| Grand Falls-Windsor CA | ** | 6 | ** | 86 | ** | 383 | ** | 11 | 485 | 486 |
| **Newfoundland & Labrador 10,000+** | **396** | **398** | **1,428** | **1,436** | **2,846** | **2,871** | **372** | **372** | **5,042** | **5,077** |

The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates:
a - Excellent, b- Very good, c - Good, d - Fair (Use with Caution)
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.
n/u: No units exist in the universe for this category n/s: No units exist in the sample for this category n/a: Not applicable
Please click Methodology or Data Reliability Tables Appendix link for more details

## 1.1.4 Private Apartment Availability Rates (%) by Bedroom Type Newfoundland and Labrador

| Centre | Bachelor | | 1 Bedroom | | 2 Bedroom | | 3 Bedroom + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 | Apr-12 | Apr-13 |
| St. John's CMA | 3.9 | 1.4 | 3.7 | 1.2 | 4.1 | 2.1 | 2.3 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 1.9 |
| Bay Roberts CA | n/u | n/u | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |
| Corner Brook CA | 4.1 | ** | 2.9 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 0.4 | 2.5 | 2.9 | 1.9 | 0.5 |
| Gander T | ** | ** | 0.8 | 4.2 | 0.7 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 0.9 | 2.8 |
| Grand Falls-Windsor CA | 53.7 | ** | 2.4 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 2.6 | ** | 0.0 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| **Newfoundland & Labrador 10,000+** | **4.7** | **1.7** | **3.3** | **1.4** | **3.0** | **2.1** | **2.3** | **3.3** | **3.2** | **2.0** |

The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates:
a - Excellent, b- Very good, c - Good, d - Fair (Use with Caution)
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.
n/u: No units exist in the universe for this category n/s: No units exist in the sample for this category n/a: Not applicable
Please click Methodology or Data Reliability Tables Appendix link for more details

## 1.1.5 Private Apartment Estimate of Percentage Change (%) of Average Rent[1] by Bedroom Type Newfoundland and Labrador

| Centre | Bachelor | | 1 Bedroom | | 2 Bedroom | | 3 Bedroom + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Apr-11 to Apr-12 | Apr-12 to Apr-13 | Apr-11 to Apr-12 | Apr-12 to Apr-13 | Apr-11 to Apr-12 | Apr-12 to Apr-13 | Apr-11 to Apr-12 | Apr-12 to Apr-13 | Apr-11 to Apr-12 | Apr-12 to Apr-13 |
| St. John's CMA | 5.0 | 2.9 | 5.0 | 4.0 | 7.4 | 5.5 | 12.1 | 5.9 | 7.1 | 4.4 |
| Bay Roberts CA | n/u | n/u | ** | n/s | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ++ |
| Corner Brook CA | ++ | 5.2 | 3.2 | 5.9 | 2.6 | 5.3 | -1.8 | 7.8 | 2.4 | 5.3 |
| Gander T | ** | ** | 1.8 | 5.2 | 0.4 | 5.9 | ++ | 7.0 | ++ | 6.2 |
| Grand Falls-Windsor CA | ** | ** | 3.5 | 1.8 | 3.1 | 2.1 | ** | ** | 3.2 | 2.1 |
| **Newfoundland & Labrador 10,000+** | **4.6** | **3.0** | **4.2** | **4.1** | **5.7** | **5.1** | **7.6** | **6.0** | **5.5** | **4.5** |

[1] The Percentage Change of Average Rent is a measure of the market movement, and is based on those structures that were common to the survey sample for both years

The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates:
a - Excellent, b- Very good, c - Good, d - Fair (Use with Caution)
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.
++ Change in rent is not statistically significant. This means that the change in rent is not statistically different than zero (0).
n/u: No units exist in the universe for this category n/s: No units exist in the sample for this category n/a: Not applicable
Please click Methodology or Data Reliability Tables Appendix link for more details

## TECHNICAL NOTE:

*Difference between Percentage Change of Average Rents (Existing and New Structures) AND Percentage Change of Average Rents from Fixed Sample (Existing Structures Only):*

Percentage Change of Average Rents (New and Existing Structures): The increase/decrease obtained from the calculation of percentage change of average rents between two years (example: $500 in the previous year vs. $550 in current survey represents an increase of 10 percent) is impacted by changes in the composition of the rental universe (e.g. the inclusion of newly built luxury rental buildings in the survey, rental units renovated/upgraded or changing tenants could put upward pressure on average rents in comparison to the previous year) as well as by the rent level movement (e.g. increase/decrease in the level of rents that landlords charge their tenants).

Percentage Change of Average Rents from Fixed Sample (Existing Structures Only): This is a measure that estimates the rent level movement. The estimate is based on structures that were common to the survey sample for both the previous year and the current Rental Market Surveys. However, some composition effects still remain e.g. rental units renovated/upgraded or changing tenants because the survey does not collect data to such level of details.

# METHODOLOGY FOR RENTAL MARKET SURVEY

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) conducts the **Rental Market Survey** (RMS) every year in April and October to estimate the relative strengths in the rental market. The survey is conducted on a sample basis in all urban areas with populations of 10,000 and more. The survey targets only privately initiated structures with at least three rental units, which have been on the market for at least three months. The survey collects market rent, available and vacant unit data for all sampled structures.
The survey is conducted by a combination of telephone interviews and site visits, and information is obtained from the owner, manager, or building superintendent. The survey is conducted during the first two weeks of April/October, and the results reflect market conditions at that time.

CMHC's Rental Market Survey provides a snapshot of vacancy and availability rates, and average rents in both new and existing structures. There also exists a measure for the change in rent that is calculated based on existing structures only. The estimate is based on structures that were common to the survey sample for both the previous year and the current Rental Market Surveys. The change in rent in existing structures is an estimate of the change in rent that the landlords charge and removes compositional effects on the rent level movement due to new buildings, conversions, and survey sample rotation. The estimate of per cent change in rent is available in all Canada and Provincial Highlights publications, and also in the CMA reports (fall survey only). The rent levels in new and existing structures are also published. While the per cent change in rents in existing structures published in the reports are statistically significant, changes in rents that one might calculate based on rent levels in new and existing structures may or may not be statistically significant.

# DEFINITIONS

**Availability:** A rental unit is considered available if the existing tenant has given, or has received, notice to move, and a new tenant has not signed a lease; or the unit is vacant (see definition of vacancy below).

**Rent:** The rent refers to the actual amount tenants pay for their unit. No adjustments are made for the inclusion or exclusion of amenities and services such as heat, hydro, parking, and hot water. For available and vacant units, the rent is the amount the owner is asking for the unit.

It should be noted that the average rents reported in this publication provide a sound indication of the amounts paid by unit size and geographical sector. Utilities such as heating, electricity and hot water may or may not be included in the rent.

**Rental Apartment Structure:** Any building containing three or more rental units, of which at least one unit is not ground oriented. Owner-occupied units are not included in the rental building unit count.

**Rental Row (Townhouse) Structure:** Any building containing three or more rental units, all of which are ground oriented with vertical divisions. Owner-occupied units are not included in the rental building unit count. These row units in some centres are commonly referred to as townhouses.

**Vacancy:** A unit is considered vacant if, at the time of the survey, it is physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental.

**Definitions of Census Areas referred to in this publication are as follows:**

A census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a large urban area (known as the urban core). The census population count of the urban core is at least 10,000 to form a census agglomeration and at least 100,000 to form a census metropolitan area. To be included in the CMA or CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census place of work data. CMAs and CAs contain whole municipalities or Census Subdivisions.

Data presented in this publication is based on Statistics Canada's 2011 Census area definitions.

**Acknowledgement**

The Rental Market Survey could not have been conducted without the cooperation of the rental property owners, managers, and building superintendents throughout Canada. CMHC acknowledges their hard work and assistance in providing timely and accurate information. As a result of their contribution, CMHC is able to provide information that benefits the entire housing industry.

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